



UU of SCV

The Flame

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PO Box 800028, Santa Clarita, CA 91380. 661-254-7866

Santa Clarita's Unitarian Universalist Congregation

December, 2023

December's theme: The Gift of Mystery

We live in a culture that loves to conquer mysteries. For us modern folks, the unexplainable is simply a lock to be picked, a code to be cracked, a puzzle to be figured out.

But what if not all mysteries are just something to be solved? What if some mysteries are also things to be listened to?

The call of our faith says, "Yes, stay skeptical. Continue to question and seek answers. But at the same time, leave space for life to speak!"

Adapted from Soul Matters

Sunday Services

December 3rd, 10:00 am

Earlier 10:00 am Start Time

We will Zoom into
UUFKC Service from Vibe. A UU of SCV Tech will be at
UUFKC to ensure reliable Zoom to us.

“Mystery”

Elaine LeCain, UUFKC



UUFKC Member Elaine LeCain & Covenant Group members will speak on the December Soul Matters topic, “Mystery.”

As Gilda Radner wrote, “Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity.”

<https://zoom.us/j/92885571595?pwd=bmRIRFBlay9jWS9PR3FnWEVGUTg4UT09>

Meeting ID: 928 8557 1595

Passcode: 98765

December 10th, 10:30 am



Happy Luminescence

Rick Kamlet



Luminescence is our Winter-season holiday of lights where we celebrate the principles that guide us, our abilities to transform the world, and the joy of seeking our own truth through *both* the blaze of spirit AND the light of reason.

Sing with us the songs that we only get to sing once a year as part of this holiday, as we honor the light that is within each of us and within all that is.

Be part of the service! Volunteer for a candle reading and lighting. Contact Rick Kamlet, rkamlet@ca.rr.com.

Guest vocalist Natalie Mendoza.

December 17th, 10:30 am

**“Seasonal Music Service –
Sing in the Light!”**
Scott Roewe



Come enjoy a journey sharing music and stories from the holidays!

December 24th, 10:30 am

“Holiday Celebration”
Rev. Dr. Ken Brown & Tommie O’Sullivan



You are all invited to a celebration of the seasonal holidays. If you have a holiday poem or short piece you’d like to share, bring it to our service. We know this may be an unusual request, but we feel this is a great way to share *ourselves* this day. We hope to see many of you at this special time.

December 31st, 10:30 am

“Endings & Beginnings

Rev. Jo Green



“Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end” are the lyrics from a popular song. The great mystery of change/transition is upon us. We are at the juxtaposition of an ending and a new beginning - yearly, congregationally, and individually.

What are the great questions we have about the mystery of this time of year? Join us in a ritually-oriented service, honoring endings and beginnings.

Join us, live at our Sunday services ...

Vibe Performing Arts Studio,
Valencia Plaza Shopping Center,
24460 ¼ Lyons Ave
(Near Vincenzo’s Pizza)

... and streaming on Zoom (except for services streamed from UU Fellowship of Kern County)

<https://tinyurl.com/ZoomUUSCV>

Or via phone at:

(669) 900-9128

Meeting ID: 3098843973 (use for password also)

“#” for personal ID

For Our Once-a-Month Service Streamed from UUFKC:

Services that are streamed from our partner congregation, UU Fellowship of Kern County, begin at 10:00 am. We gather at Vibe Performing Arts Studio to light our own chalice and watch the sermon together. We intend to be adding our own in-person sections of the service – let us know what you would like to have included in-person.

For those watching from home, a special streaming URL is provided (which changes for each service) – see service write-up above for the special URL.

This Month's Activities

UU of SCV Holiday Party (and White Elephant Gift Exchange)



The annual Adult Holiday Party will be at the home of Marianne Bakic and Leon Kasparian on **December 16th at 7:00 pm.**

It is an Adult Holiday Party because there won't be an actual Santa or elves or reindeer (except those depicted on holiday sweaters). However, there will be lots of UU's having fun.

A favorite event of the evening is the White Elephant gift exchange. What is a White Elephant gift? Good question. This kind of gift is often not something bought, but something that is lying around the house or garage or even left over from last year's gift exchange. The gifts are often amusing and unwrapping them is a lot of fun.

The dress is holiday attire. Please bring finger food (something that doesn't require a knife, spoon or fork to eat) and a White Elephant gift.

Their address is: 28823 Phantom Trail, Santa Clarita, CA 91390

If you have questions, their telephone number is 661-297-5756



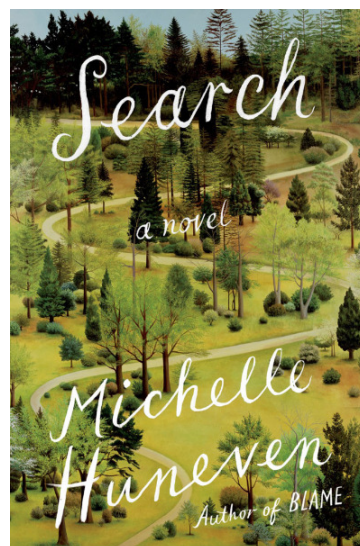
Note: Wikipedia defines a white elephant gift exchange as "a party game where amusing and impractical gifts are exchanged during festivities." Yup, that's it!!!

Book Club Suzie Rizzo

This is a welcoming and joyful group of readers who love to share their thoughts on the selections chosen. Everyone's presence is encouraged. This group meets the second Wednesday of each month. We will meet at **6:00 pm** at the home of Lois Linnert. Please bring a dish to

share and a beverage of your choice, as well as your thoughts and your critique.

UUSCV's Covid Policy is followed.



The book for **December 13th** is “Search,” by Michelle Huneven. This novel is about a fictional congregation, the Arroyo Unitarian Universalist Community Church, in the San Gabriel foothills. This Church is “famous for its preaching, social activism, and its enchanting if derelict three-acre gardens.” Its congregants are a collection of upper-middle class liberals, aging hippies, socially conscious millennials, lawyers and teachers. A Search Committee has been appointed to find a new minister. This book is a delightful read as it takes us on a journey our congregation is facing. We trust we will get insight into the processes and outcomes we are facing.

Please join us for a lively discussion.

The book for January 10, 2024 is “Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi.

Contact Suzie Rizzo (baroness1@sbcglobal.net) or Marianne Bakic (mariannebakic@icloud.com) if you have any questions.

Movie Night

SEJ Team,
Submitted by Suzie Rizzo

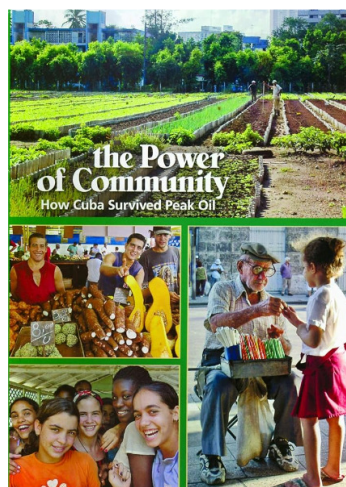
SEJ is having movie night.

Documentaries, biographies, novels, and more will be shown at the home of Suzie Rizzo on the second Friday of each month, except December 2023.

Please join us at 6:00 pm for conversation and food. The film

will start at 7:00 pm. Please bring finger foods to share, vegan and vegetarian preferred. Please contact Suzie at baroness1@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions.

This month only we will show the movie on the third Friday, December 15th. The film for December is, “The Power of Community. How Cuba Survived Peak Oil.”



This film has lessons that we think apply to today. “When Cuba lost access to Soviet oil in the early 1990s, the country faced an immediate crisis—feeding the population—and an ongoing challenge: how to create a new low-energy society. Cuba transitioned from large, fossil-fuel intensive farming to small, less energy-intensive organic farms and urban gardens, and from a highly industrial society to a more sustainable one...”

Please join us for this provocative film.

The film for January 12, 2024 is, “Live to 100,” parts 1 and 2. Parts 3 and 4 will be shown in February 2024.

Bend the Arc Takes a Holiday Break

Lou Paparozzi



Our next Bend the Arc meeting that would have been on December 20th is being cancelled due to conflicts with holiday activities that week. We will resume “Bending” on January 17th, on our usual third Wednesday of the month. It will be at Suzie Rizzo’s home. **Socializing 6:00 to 6:30 pm; Discussion 6:30 to 7:30 pm.** Join us for an informed, respectful, and lively examination of some of the topics of the day for discussion of local, national and world events.

Please bring: Finger Food and Topics for Discussion

Contact Lou Paparozzi for any additional information.

Open Topics Discussion Group On Break for December

Barbara McCoy & Lois Linnert



The Open Topics Discussion group talks about ideas that are of interest to us. Each person gets to express their ideas on the monthly topic.

We typically meet the 4th Monday of each month at the home of Lois Linnert in Friendly Valley. But since the 4th Monday in December is Christmas, we will cancel the December meeting and resume in January.

Questions contact Barbara McCoy at bmccoy1@socal.rr.com or call Lois Linnert at 661-299-5393.

Game Nights

Beth Jenkins



ZOOM Game Night -- Our monthly Zoom Game Nights will be occurring now on one Saturday a month. This may vary each month; December's Saturday ZOOM Game Night is on **Saturday 12/2, 7:00 pm**

IN-PERSON Game Night -- In-person Game Nights will occur on the 4th Friday of each month, at the home of Beth Jenkins. We'd love to have you join us for a relaxing potluck followed by playing mostly word games. Our in-person Game Night for December will be on **Friday 12/22, 6:30 pm**. If you will be attending, please RSVP to Beth at newbethj@yahoo.com. It is helpful if you can indicate what appetizer, dessert, or other food item you will be bringing.

Drum Circle

Beth Jenkins



Our meditative Drum Circle is continuing to meet on the first Friday evening every month, at **7 pm**—so this month that will be on **December 1st**.

No experience necessary, and our Drum Circle leader Burl Bolerjack brings a great deal of drums and other percussion instruments from which to choose.

This Drum Circle includes a brief "check-in" followed by our first of three or four sets of drumming started by Burl providing a basic beat. It is a wonderful experience and newcomers are very welcome! This Drum Circle is at the home of Beth Jenkins. If you will be attending, it is very helpful to RSVP by Thursday night the night before to Beth at newbethj@yahoo.com, or text to 661-478-2036.

Note: a donation to support Burl's transportation cost is much appreciated but not required. All donations are shared with UU of SCV.

Friday Meditations

on Zoom

Barbara Wampole

Please feel free to just drop in. No experience is necessary. It's simple. If you'd like to join us to share simple sitting meditation and mindfulness practices, we continue to have a unique opportunity to use Zoom since we began sheltering at home.

Our friends at UU Fellowship of Kern County are welcome to join us for Meditation!

Every Friday from 11 am to Noon. If you'd like to join us, please contact Barbara Wampole. [Connect with the UU of SCV Zoom](#)

Poets & Writers Group on Hiatus

The Poets and Writers group is on hiatus until February 2024. Please contact Beth Jenkins or Glenda Nowakowski for more information, or if you are interested in joining when we start up again.

Mark Your Calendar: Mid-Year Congregational Meeting

The Board

UU of SCV will hold its Mid-Year Congregational Meeting following the worship service on **January 21st, 2024, at 11:45 am.** The meeting will be rich with information and open to your questions. Join us in person at Vibe or by Zoom on our regular UUSCV Zoom site.

ANNOUNCEMENT: UUSCV Renews Welcoming Congregation Status!



The UUA has informed us that we have successfully renewed our Welcoming Congregation status. This is the result of many hours of work on the part of Kevin Corcoran, who led the effort, along with Rev. Megan Visser, and with additional help from Chris Hankla. The work involved not only applying, but also coordinating and implementing a program of activities. We extend our thanks to them all!

The Director of the UUA's LGBTQ and Multicultural Program, the Rev. Michael J. Crumpler, wrote:

Dear Kevin and Members of Unitarian Universalists of Santa Clarita Valley,

Congratulations!

You have successfully completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2023. Sincere congratulations on your ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ welcome and inclusion in and beyond Santa Clarita, CA.

It was a pleasure to read about all you have accomplished and the powerful work you have done to ensure that UUSCV is meeting the needs of queer and trans congregants and the wider community in the following ways:

- I. Becoming a Welcoming Congregation – 2004

- II. Welcoming Worship • Flower Power: 100 Years of UU Ceremony – 6/11/23 • Could We Welcome a Trans God? – 9/3/23
- III. Welcoming Days of Observance • International Transgender Day of Visibility • Stonewall Riots Anniversary • National Coming Out Day • Transgender Day of Remembrance • LGBTQ+ Pride • LGBT+ History Month
- IV. Welcoming Religious Education • THC Trans Inclusion in Congregations – 3/12/23
- V. Support a Welcoming Project • Donated to LGBTQ+ Pride Support and Participation, SCV LGBTQ+ Center, and PFLAG

Social & Environmental Justice

Social & Environmental Justice (SEJ) Team News

Glenda Nowakowski & Louise Klatt

NAACP - Suzie Rizzo and Ingrid VanDorn attended the November NAACP meeting. There was a presentation by the first African American oncologist at Kaiser, who spoke about breast cancer in the African American community. African American women tend to get breast cancer at an earlier age and have a lower survival rate than white women. For these reasons, it is recommended that they start having mammograms sooner than the usual recommendations.

The NAACP general meeting is on the third Thursday of every month. The PAC meeting (focusing on voter registration) is on the second Tuesday of the month. Contact Suzie or Ingrid for more information.

Postcard Table – UUSCV congregants wrote 8 postcards to elected officials at the November session. The table

is set up in the annex on the second Sunday of the month, from the end of the service to the beginning of the SEJ team meeting at noon. Materials, addresses and sample scripts are provided. Stop by and make your opinions known!

Veterans Housing – Glenda attended a hearing of the State Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, chaired by Asm. Schaivo. Representatives of several agencies discussed their efforts to reach those in need and to provide interim and permanent supportive housing to unhoused veterans. The system is very large and complex. Projects can have multiple funders, each having their own list of requirements. This causes confusion and limits the number of applicants who can fulfill them all. Funding needs to be expanded and streamlined.

One promising effort is building affordable communities for veterans. The homes are smaller and easier to maintain, services are provided, and residents are not penalized for improving their situation by getting education and better jobs. These communities provide stability for the veterans and their families, and their children graduate high school at a greater rate.

Hart District Parental Notification (Forced Outing)

Proposed Policy – The Hart District is considering a parental notification policy, where teachers would be required to notify parents if a student was using pronouns different than their birth sex, or showing other signs of social transitioning. This would be highly detrimental to transgender and questioning students. School may be the only place where they feel safe, and teacher may be the ones that they can confide in. Outed students may be in jeopardy of being physically or emotionally abused, or thrown out of their homes. The school board held a meeting on November 15 to discuss the matter. Glenda attended the meeting, and Rev. Ken Brown and Sara McDaniels spoke eloquently against the proposed policy. The Board has not yet made a decision. If you wish to express your opinions, you can email the members of the school board. Their emails are at

<https://www.hartdistrict.org/apps/pages/governing-board-members>.

Chiquita Canyon – The situation with the Chiquita Canyon Landfill is serious. Currently there is a fire inside the landfill, and toxic, malodorous gases leak and affect the residents of Val Verde and Castaic.

Cop City – Atlanta is proposing to tear out 83 acres of woodland to build a “Cop City” to train police officers and firefighters. There are concerns that the facility will be used to militarize police, and also concerns about the environmental impact. Protestors against the facility have been arrested and charged with domestic terrorism and racketeering. Other cities are considering similar facilities.

Movie Night – see the article about the Dec 15th Movie Night.

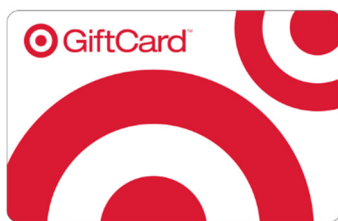
The next meeting of the SEJ Team will be on **December 10th at 12 pm** at Vibe Performing Arts Center and also via UUSCV Zoom. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Gift Card Collection for Teens

(Box in Lobby thru Dec 10th)

Rick Kamlet

**\$25 Target (only) Gift Cards
or Cash**



For the Teens at



UU of SCV is collecting gift cards again this year for teens who have been affected by domestic violence, or by mental health, alcohol or drug issues.

Why teens? The SCV Domestic Violence Center informed us a number of years ago that teens tend to get left out from holiday toy collection drives. So, we started an annual UU of SCV tradition of helping them with gift cards, which allow them to choose their own gifts from a broad-category retailer. We selected Target because they appear to have a better history of ethics than some other similar retailers.

Distribution -- The SCV Child & Family Center will distribute the cards to teens who are in their programs (who will, of course, remain anonymous to us), with a focus on those in the domestic violence program.

\$25 Target Gift Cards

We will have a Gift card collection box at Sunday Services, and this year, this will be the only way to donate. Unfortunately, the online and check donation methods caused some accounting problems, so we are simplifying it this year to just dropping a \$25 Target gift card (or cash) in the dedicated box at our Services.

The box will be out **through December 10th.**

We appreciate your donations for the teens.



Church Workings

Still Looking for Your Grant-Request Ideas!



What is your vision for the future of UUSCV?

The Spirit Level Foundation is celebrating 25 years of helping to strengthen and grow congregations like ours through generous grants. Our Ministerial Intern program was made possible by such a grant. We are now exploring new ways to expand our reach into the community with their assistance.

Spirit Level Foundation provides funding for:

- Making worship more compelling and transformative
- Strengthening virtual presence
- Community outreach
- Religious exploration
- Purchasing a permanent home
- And much more!

The past three or four years have been difficult, but we have persisted, creating an alternative virtual presence that will continue to serve us well into the future. Imagine what we could do with support from a Spirit Level grant. The only thing we can't request from them is something that involves paying our staff members, but any other idea is fair game.

We welcome YOUR ideas! Please share them with Rick Kamlet at rkamlet@ca.rr.com.

Board of Trustees Highlights Carmela Camp

- We are exploring avenues for resuming outreach efforts.
- The December Third Sunday collection chosen by the Board will be the UUA Disaster Relief Fund.
- Our Covid policy has been revised and is more in line with LA County Guidelines.
- The December Board meeting of UUSCV will be on Sunday, December 17th at 5:00 pm via Zoom. The next joint meeting of the Boards of UUSCV and UUFKC will be on Saturday, January 13 at 1:00 pm via Zoom.

Update to UU of SCV Covid Policy (Nov 2023)

Rick Kamlet

The UU of SCV Board has updated the congregation's Covid policy to be less restrictive, more effective, and more in line with current LA County guidelines. It is posted [here](#) on our website and takes effect immediately.

In-Person Covid/Cold/Flu Guidelines for Worship Services:

Face Masks -- Anyone who wants to wear a face mask is encouraged and welcome to do so.

When to Stay Home -- For the health of the attendees, anyone who has been experiencing symptoms that could be from Covid, cold, or flu -- such as cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, tiredness/fatigue, chest pain, or joint/muscle pain -- should stay home. You are encouraged to enjoy the worship services via Zoom instead of in-person, and you should not attend in-person events.

Exception: For anyone who may have these symptoms but knows that they are not from

Covid, cold, or flu – such as those who have a chronic non-contagious condition -- this does not apply.

Informing Board about Accidental Exposure to Covid

– Please inform a UU of SCV board member if you come down with Covid shortly after having attended a worship service in-person. And if you come down with Covid shortly after having attended another type of UUSCV event, inform the event organizer. The attendees should be informed so that they can be on alert for symptoms, and, when possible, we will try our best not to reveal your name.

How Long to Isolate from Covid -- If you come down with Covid, follow these Los Angeles County Guidelines for how long to stay isolated (ie, not coming to worship services or in-person events):

To count the days:

- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms.
- If you don't have symptoms, Day 0 is when your first positive test was collected. If you go on to get symptoms, restart with Day 0 as the first day of symptoms.

Ending isolation:

You may end isolation after Day 5* (i.e., between Day 6-10) if:

- You have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine,
- **AND** you don't have any other symptoms, or your symptoms are mild and improving.

**Note: LAC DPH strongly recommends that you get a negative test for COVID-19 before ending isolation between Day 6-10. (If you do test, it is best to use antigen tests (including self-tests) to lower the risk of false positives.)*

If your symptoms of COVID-19 are not improving, you should continue to isolate until your symptoms are improving or until after Day 10.

If you have a condition that weakens your immune system or you were severely ill or hospitalized with COVID-19 you might need to stay home for longer than 10 days. Talk to your doctor about when you can be around other people.

If your COVID-19 symptoms return or get worse after you end isolation, you may have COVID-19 rebound. Take an antigen test. If you test positive, you need to

restart isolation at Day 0. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms or concerns.

Board Officers

President - *unfilled*

Vice President - Rev. Dr. Ken Brown

Co-Treasurer - Eric Klatt

Co-Treasurer – Chris Hankla

Secretary - Carmela Camp

Member-at-Large - Rick Kamlet

Member-at-Large - Gordon Uppman

Member-at-Large – Diane Lin

Pastoral Care

Your UU of SCV Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Care Team serves those in our congregation needing support. Current team members are Lucy Bates, Diane Lin, Barbara McCoy, and Ingrid Van Dorn. If you are interested in joining us, we can always use the help. Or maybe you could be one of our “helping hands people” for those occasions when we need extra help.

The following is our mission statement:

The Pastoral Care Team is an extension of the Minister's own pastoral care presence. This care is offered with strict confidentiality. Pastoral care is available to those experiencing illness, injury, grief, loneliness, or an unexpected emergency. Team members may provide help with meals, transportation, phone calls, visits, and errands.

During this time without a minister - Remember we are here to help should you need it. And if needed we can connect you with a minister.

Primary contact is Barbara McCoy – 818 438-8351.

Membership

Membership Team

Gratitudes



Virtually everyone in our congregation helps out in some way. There are so many things that people do, that we can't possibly list them all individually. Everyone wants to be appreciated, so when you become aware of someone contributing to the life of the congregation, be sure to acknowledge them and express your personal gratitude.

Birthdays

Paula Hock	12/02
Tommie O'Sullivan	12/02
Sally White	12/17

Membership Anniversaries

Sally White	12/21/2014
Kevin Corcoran	12/03/2017
Karla Edwards	12/10/2017
Emily Larbaoui	12/10/2017
Barbara Wampole	12/10/2017
Torrey Longeteig	12/01/2019

Member Emily Larbaoui's Walk for Sandy Hook Remembrance Challenge



Every day 44 children are killed or injured by gun violence in America. If this statistic startles you, please donate to the Sandy Hook Remembrance Challenge to promote gun control and non-violence in schools and beyond.

I'll be walking 44 miles between now and December 14th, the anniversary of the Sandy Hook Massacre. You can visit my Facebook page and scroll down to the donation info -- a green graphic with a white donation button. My name on Facebook is Emily Rice Larbaoui.

Thank you for your interest and support.

CALENDAR

Events and activities may change. Check the Friday weekly announcement emails for updates.

Meditation – Every Friday 11 am to noon, Zoom

- 1 **Drum Circle**, 7:00 pm, rsvp to Beth Jenkins
- 2 **Zoom Game Night**, 7:00 pm

Sunday

- 3 **Sunday Service, 10:00 am**

Mystery

Elaine LeCain, UUFKC



IMPORTANT:

Zoom (at Vibe) from UUFKC

Different Start Time: 10:00 am

Different Zoom Link for On-Line (*see listing*)

Sunday

- 10 **Sunday Service, 10:30 am**
Happy Luminescence!
Rick Kamlet

(Last day for Teen gift cards)

Post Card Writing -- Immediately after the Service

Social & Environmental Justice Team
12 noon, at Vibe and on Zoom

- 13 **Book Club**, 6:00 pm, Lois Linnert's home
- 15 **Movie Night**, Suzie Rizzo's home, 6:00 pm for food and conversation, 7:00 pm for movie

16 Holiday Party

& White Elephant Gift Exchange,

7 pm, at Marianne Bakic and Leon Kasparian's home, 28823 Phantom Trail in Santa Clarita

Sunday

- 17 **Sunday Service, 10:30 am**
Seasonal Music Service – Sing in the Light
Scott Roewe

Board Meeting, 5:00 pm, Zoom

- 22 **In-Person Game Night**, 6:30 pm

Sunday

- 24 **Sunday Service, 10:30 am**
Holiday Celebration
Rev. Dr. Ken Brown & Tommie O'Sullivan

Sunday

- 31 **Sunday Service, 10:30 am**
Endings & Beginnings
Rev. Jo Green

Open Topics Discussion Group, date to be announced, 6:00 pm, Lois Linnert's home

Bend the Arc and the **Poets & Writers Group** are taking a break this month.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Jan 21, after the service, **Mid-Year Congregational Meeting**